



CHRONICLING CIVIL-SERVICE LIFE FOR CALIFORNIA STATE WORKERS

Lawmaker wants (relatively) speedy exodus from BOE building

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Another corroded pipe leaking toilet water. Another bill. Another study ordered up.

Must be the **Board of Equalization** headquarters.

Following yet another disgusting waste-water line leak, Assemblyman **Roger Dickinson** is pushing on two fronts to get state workers out of the troubled Downtown Sacramento high rise, although the best-case scenario for emptying out what has become a public money pit of epic proportions “would be measured in years, not months,” he said.

On Tuesday, the Sacramento Democrat asked a joint committee of Assembly and Senate legislators for an audit of the facility and introduced legislation that would create a plan to move BOE’s employees into a new facility.

“The state,” Dickinson said in a telephone interview, “continues to dump a ton of money into it and we have employees feeling the health effects. It’s putting the public at risk. My hope is that within three to five years at the outside we would have people in a new building.”

The department’s high-rise headquarters has a long history defects that have included mold, burst pipes, unreliable elevators, trace levels of toxic substances and falling exterior glass panels. Dickinson’s office said the state faces a \$30 million repair bill over the next few years to replace 2,000 pieces of exterior spandrel glass panels, test interior air quality, remove mold and fix those decaying waste-water pipes.

The latest episode of the building's sorry soggy saga occurred Jan. 31 when a leak was found in a women's restroom on the 6th floor of the 450 N St. building. Workers fixed the leak over two weekends after finding it came from a corroded waste-water pipe in the building's core.

Other waste lines have leaked before. [A state-commissioned report](#) says pipes carrying waste from the 24-story building's toilets, sinks and other waste-water sources weren't installed to code, lack ventilation and aren't properly sloped. Some sinks are being used for food preparation aren't designed for the purpose, the report says, while water and energy-conserving fixtures don't use enough water to keep the lines flushed.

The result, according to the report: "...corrosion damage has cascaded and spread throughout the drain and vent system."

State officials have discussed moving the 2,000 or so BOE workers out of the state-owned building into a new facility that would also house another 750 staff spread in various offices around the Sacramento region. Aside from the building's defects, the facility is too small, board officials have said.

Lawmakers have ordered up studies and offered up legislation in the past aimed at getting employees out of the building, but finances always have been an obstacle. BOE's lease payments to the state service tens of millions of dollars in bond debt on the facility that won't be retired until 2021. A BOE exodus would leave the building empty with no lessee for at least a couple years for remodeling and remediation.

Still, Dickinson said that he believes that there are solutions among more than two dozen BOE building proposals submitted by various developers and land owners last November and that his legislation would "identify the best course to make a move."